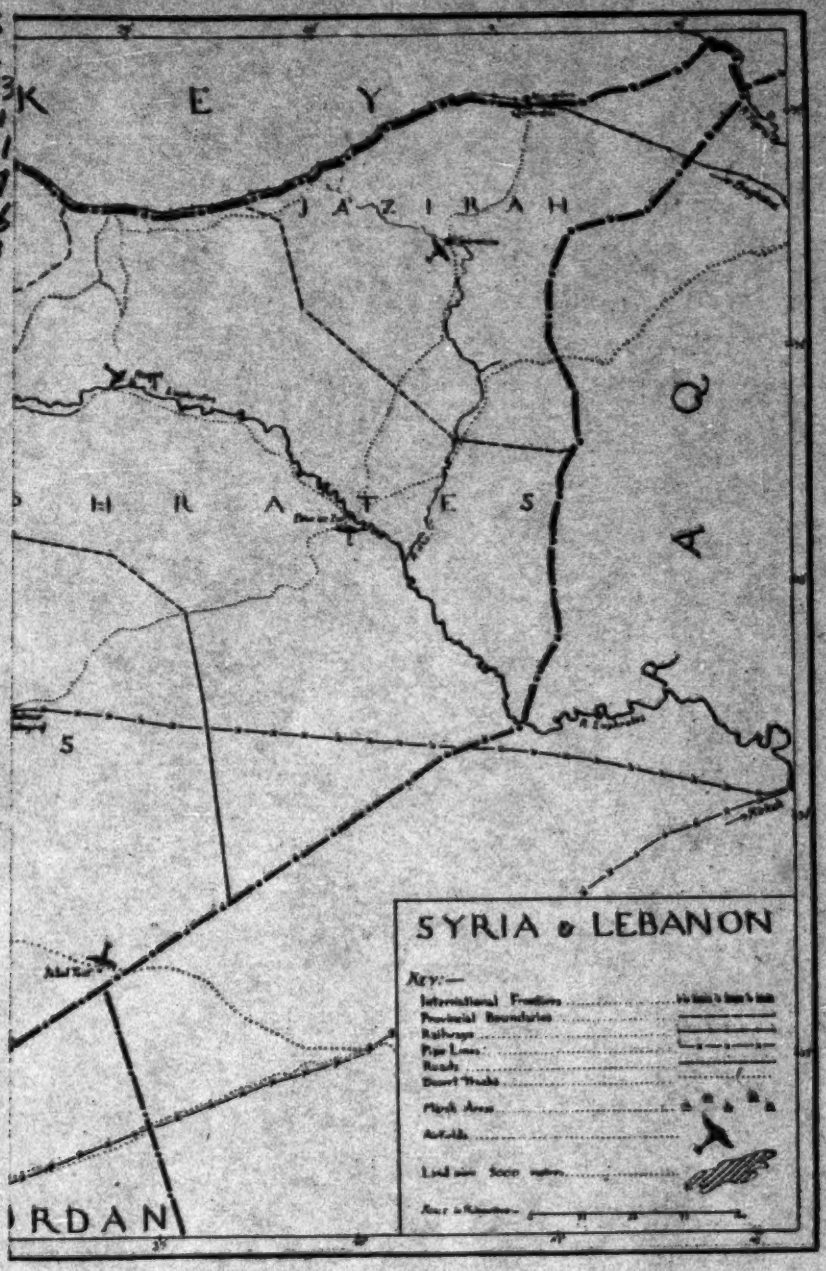
T U R K
HATAY
A L E P P O
E U P H
HAMA
LATAKIA
H O M S
D A M A S C U S
JEBEL DRUZE
TRANSJORDA

END MAP (A)

S
L
133
131
491
487
496
508



END MAP (B)

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the port has been increasing rapidly. To some extent this has been promoted by government regulations which direct certain classes of imports and exports via Latakia. It should be noted, however, that these have not seriously interfered with the traditional traffic between Beirut and Damascus and southern Syria. For the most part they buttress a traffic flow which would in any event tend via Latakia as the natural port for northern Syria. At present cargo must still be lightered but, considering this circumstance, cargo handling is fairly rapid. The port company appears to be well managed and in recent years has earned, on its paid-in capital, a modest profit which rose to over 5% in 1953. With the completion of the port, it should prove possible to reduce handling costs substantially.

IV CIVIL AVIATION

Supplementing rail and road transport, there is a domestic air service linking Damascus with Aleppo, Kamichliye and Latakia. It is operated with a DC-3 by the Syrian Airways, an autonomous government enterprise dependent on the Ministry of Finance. The financial results of this operation have not been divulged publicly, but it is evidently not self-supporting. The government regards it primarily as a promotional venture and the tariffs are correspondingly low. It must be recognized that occasional rapid air communication between the principal cities is desirable, and the mission accordingly anticipates that a new twin-motor plane, costing perhaps £S 600,000 may soon be needed to maintain this service.

Damascus is the country's principal airport and is served by a number of international airlines. Considerable amounts have been spent on the improvement and equipment of this airport which has been given a Class B designation by the ICAO. Of the £S 1.075 million provided in the 1954 budget for airport construction, equipment and maintenance, over 70% was destined for Damascus. In view of the many more urgent tasks confronting the government, we see no justification for the proposal to construct an entirely new airport for Damascus. By continuing about the same level of expenditures in the future as in recent years, the government should be able to make the requisite improvements in existing airports, which include, besides Damascus, a Class C airport at Aleppo, a Class G airfield at Kamichliye and an airport as yet unclassified at Deir ez Zor.

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means of promotion. Indeed, in the first example given it was necessary to exempt certain materials for southern public works, sugar for the Homs refinery (by special license) and various other large imports, so that much of the remaining cargo affected by the decree would have entered through Latakia in any event. It is questionable whether the actual benefit to Latakia is enough to offset the domestic and international resentment engendered.

Favorable adjustment of the various port charges, such as those for anchorage, mooring, cargo handling and storage, offers a more satisfactory means of promotion. In these the Syrian government has already shown a flexible policy, readjusting the rate schedule from time to time; we feel that this policy should be continued. Inducements of this kind, together with constantly improving service to shippers, will in general meet the competition of other ports with greater benefit to the Syrian economy than negative or restrictive measures.

IV CIVIL AVIATION

In a period of a few years Syria has made appreciable progress in the development of her civil aviation. Wisely, at this early stage, she has concentrated on the most-needed domestic services and the educational steps to popularize air transport, while at the same time providing suitable airport facilities to insure good connection with international lines. Domestic air mail service was inaugurated in April 1954.

International Services

By the end of 1953 nine international airlines provided Syria with direct service to all parts of the world. These call primarily at Damascus, although the Class C airport at Aleppo is used internationally to some extent.

The Damascus airport is situated only 10 kilometers southwest of the center of the city on an excellent road, at an altitude of 715 meters. It has a main runway of 2,550 meters and a cross-wind runway of 1,000 meters, both paved. Runways, taxiways and aprons will take aircraft of up to 50 tons. Equipment includes full lighting to ICAO specifications,

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a high-power non-directional radio beacon, VHF direction finder for bad weather, and its own 150 KW diesel power generating plant. Radio communication is maintained with Aleppo, Amsterdam, Athens, Baghdad, Basra, Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul, Djeddah, Jerusalem, Karachi, Nicosia, Paris, Rome and Teheran. 508

Both in the interest of international service and for the development of qualified domestic personnel the Syrian government has made good use of international technical assistance. Since 1953 it has had a team of ICAO experts in the country to train Syrian staff for the various ground services. In addition the government has sent a number of young Syrians overseas on fellowships to study aeronautical engineering, radio, air navigation, meteorology and aviation legislation.

Syrian Airways

Syrian Airways operates DC-3 flights between Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Kamichliye, Deir ez Zor and Palmyra, as well as Beirut. 509

At present no attempt is made to operate on an economic basis. Passenger rates range between £S 0.07 and £S 0.18 per kilometer. Freight is carried for as little as £S 0.67 per ton-kilometer on certain routes (against an estimated average cost of at least £S 1.60 and probably much more). Deficits are met by the government, while revenue may be used by the line for development purposes. The objective at this time is mainly to promote air transport by all available means. Landing fees are kept low, the tax on aviation gasoline is only 18 piasters per 100 liters, and Syria imposes no income tax on airline operations.

As accounts are now kept the actual expenditures for civil aviation, and for Syrian Airways in particular, are not easily separated from the national defense budget. The mission feels that the time has come to set up an independent accounting system for Syrian Airways, to enable the government to measure its progress against costs from year to year. Only in this way can the domestic line develop eventually into an economically sound business. Undoubtedly government financial support will be needed for some time, but the government must be in a position to evaluate its effectiveness.

For extensions and replacements it is very likely that more DC-3 airplanes can be acquired at favorable prices. Although this type is no longer